

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 288 251

EA 019 742

AUTHOR Allen, Dennis L.; Peinert, William F.
 TITLE Evaluate Teaching--Not Teachers!
 PUB DATE Jun 87
 NOTE 5p.
 PUB TYPE Journal Articles (080) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
 JOURNAL CIT Updating School Board Policies; v18 n6 pl-3 Jun 1987

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Board of Education Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; *Evaluation Methods; Peer Evaluation; Principals; Self Evaluation (Individuals); Student Evaluation of Teacher Performance; *Teacher Effectiveness; *Teacher Evaluation; *Teaching Skills

IDENTIFIERS *North Olmsted City Schools OH

ABSTRACT

In North Olmsted City Schools, Ohio, teacher evaluation is a continuous, cooperative, constructive process involving both the evaluator and the teachers. One set of performance variables evaluated relates to professional climate: (1) classroom management; (2) pupil-teacher relationships; (3) pupil-pupil relationships; (4) teacher-parent communication; and (5) performance of required school routines and responsibilities. New teachers, and those who have not gained tenure, receive a comprehensive evaluation that requires three full evaluation conferences per year. Each conference requires observations with pre- and post-meetings dealing with the intent, content, and methodology of the observations. Tenured teachers undergo a comprehensive evaluation every third year. During the interim when tenured teachers are not evaluated by their building principals, they formulate their own alternative evaluation plans that have included student, parent, and peer evaluation of teaching performance; videotaped lessons focusing on specific teaching behaviors; as well as specific project and product-oriented activities (19 examples of such activities are cited). (MLF)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

ED288251

Updating SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES

Volume 18/Number 6/June 1987

A component of the Educational Policies Service of the National School Boards Association provided to NSBA Direct Affiliates and EPS subscribers

Evaluate teaching—not teachers!

by Dennis L. Allen and
William F. Peinert

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Floyd

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 019 742

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Updating **SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES**

Volume 18/Number 6/June 1987

A component of the Educational Policies Service of the National School Boards Association provided to NSBA Direct Affiliates and EPS subscribers

Evaluate teaching—not teachers!

by *Dennis L. Allen and
William F. Peinert*

Teacher evaluation is the key to providing leadership to a school system's instructional program. Unlike individual inservice sessions, it can provide ongoing continuity and consistency that is needed if staff development is to make a difference in the performance of each teacher in each classroom. At the same time, teacher evaluation also is a sensitive issue that involves professional integrity, academic freedom, and job security.

For these reasons, the North Olmsted City Schools (K-12, 4,650 students) thought that its principals' major focus should be teacher evaluation.

Background

Historically, we had used a narrative, open-ended evaluation form that was written by the principal and submitted to the superintendent. In some cases, these evaluations were submitted without the teacher's knowledge.

About seven years ago, we adopted a procedure that included a checklist rating and short narrative; teachers signed off on the evaluation at a post-conference. While most agreed that this was an improvement, there was dissatisfaction with the categories rated because they emphasized the noninstructional duties that typify teacher responsibilities. This feeling was heightened when the teacher union made the concern a major point of contention during a 1983 strike, albeit that money was the real issue.

As part of the work stoppage settlement, it was agreed that a committee of three teachers and three administrators

Dennis L. Allen is assistant superintendent and William F. Peinert is superintendent of North Olmsted City Schools, Ohio.

would develop and recommend new procedures for evaluations. After a year of research, including visitations to other school systems, the committee recommended a new, comprehensive evaluation system to the superintendent.

New emphases

The new evaluation instrument stresses the instructional process by structuring narrative comment according to the elements of effective teaching identified by Madeline Hunter. The degree and quality of performance in the areas of preparation, planning, anticipatory set, modeling, and guided practice are evaluated. Only one-fourth of the categories relate to nonteaching responsibilities, such as parent communication, routine assignments, and other professional climate variables—a considerable switch from evaluating grooming habits, appearance, etc.

Principals participated in extensive inservice to learn how to write narrative evaluations. As important, the program was initiated through a series of inservice sessions for teachers and principals that used a locally developed slide presentation in which examples highlighted each measurable component of teaching.

Teachers and administrators soon perceived a major shift in attitudes toward the process. There was more concern about evaluation because teaching itself would be more closely scrutinized. But there also was a positive reaction to the overall approach. Several reasons can be cited.

First, teacher representatives were involved in the development of the documents from their first draft through editing of the galley proofs.

Second, each teacher on the commit-

tee was teamed with an administrator to present the inservice program to the faculty. The joint nature of this initial exposure to the program helped to create a positive impression on staff.

Finally, the emphasis on classroom observation of previously agreed upon variables created more consistency and continuity between principals and teachers from various schools in the application of the procedure. This, in itself, helped to lend credence to the program.

Taken in total, these three factors built a solid foundation for the acceptance of our new teacher evaluation process.

Instrument application

In North Olmsted, we pride ourselves on the successful promotion of individualized and continuous progress for our students. In the same vein, we want to provide methods for differentiating between teachers with varying career status, experience, and professional needs in relation to staff development.

As a result, depending upon experience level, a teacher may be evaluated as many as three times a year (with each evaluation consisting of at least two observations) or only once every third year. The former applies to new teachers and those applying for tenure; it is the major tool for making contract decisions. The latter is for teachers with over five years of experience.

What may be a unique feature of the program occurs during the years in which an experienced teacher is not observed or evaluated. Here, a process called an alternative evaluation is used. A teacher is provided the latitude during this period to choose from peer evaluation, self-evaluation, student evalua-

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

tion, parent evaluation, or job targets as a means toward professional growth.

Each teacher can self-select a tailor-made method in an area they have determined would be meaningful and would provide evidence to the school system of their progress toward identified goals. This process recognizes their individual differences, acknowledges their experience, and respects their professionalism. "Control" is maintained by requiring administrative approval of the selected alternative method.

Goals

The major focus of the evaluation program is the teacher who is beginning a career or who has not gained tenure in the school system. These educators are designated as level one participants and complete a full-scale, total involvement evaluation program.

More specifically, the complete or comprehensive evaluation requires three full evaluation conferences. Each conference in turn requires two observations with pre- and post-meetings dealing with the intent, content, and methodology of the observations. Tenured teachers undergo a comprehensive evaluation every third year.

Clearly, the comprehensive evaluation is time consuming. Nevertheless, our experience indicates that the emphasis on multi-conference and multi-observation presents a clear message that improvement of instruction is our constant concern and clear direction.

Alternative methods

The alternative evaluation is used primarily to broaden the teacher's perspective and assist the teacher in professional growth—not for summative judgments regarding employment.

Evaluations of teaching performance from several perspectives take place through the use of the alternative evaluation plans during the two-year period when tenured teachers are not evaluated through observation by their building principal.

Teachers formulate their own plan through conferences with their supervisor early in the school year. In most cases, teachers determine the overall objective. Where specific teaching behaviors have been deemed below expectations, however, supervisors assist teachers in identifying specified objectives designed to develop their skills in these deficient areas.

An example of the latter case is a teacher who is evaluated as not meeting performance standards in the area of "checking for understanding." The supervisor and teacher would determine that the objective would be to research the topic, identify strategies to improve the teacher's skill in checking for understanding, and implement the strategies in classroom instruction.

In many instances, teachers then ask other teachers or administrators to observe the implementation phase. In some cases, videotape is used to help the teacher analyze this phase. Toward the end of the school year, a post-conference is held to discuss progress in meeting the objective and plans to maintain the acquired skills in the future.

When the plans are formulated, they are written to include the objective, procedures, and timeline for various phases of implementation. Both teacher and administrator sign the form. At the post-conference, both parties write a narrative describing outcomes of the process. Each also writes a reaction to their participation in the alternative evaluation plan.

Different perspectives

Most alternative plans are the result of a

teacher's own perceived need or desire to develop a particular skill, obtain experience in a certain area, or gain the perspective of their teaching from another point of view. Typical of the latter plans are those that involve student evaluation; student evaluation is used at all levels, but most often with secondary students.

When using student evaluation, teachers "school" students in some aspect of teaching and then ask them to observe the instructor in this area and rate them with some sort of evaluation scale. For example, students might be asked to note the frequency and quality of referencing coursework application to other subject areas. Some plans include allowances for measuring growth by administering the evaluation instrument at the beginning and the end of the school year.

Students react to such plans positively. Most take the process seriously and teachers have learned a great deal from the students' input.

Policy foundation

The most important indicator of the effectiveness and efficiency of a school lies in the quality of the staff. Staff recruitment, selection, and staff development all are critical components of a sound personnel program. Each of these areas should be governed by sound, goal-oriented, and practical policies.

Staff evaluation also is critical to improving the effectiveness of instruction. In fact, evaluation of certified teaching staff is essential to improving instruction, and a policy that provides support and direction for teacher evaluation, with clear procedures, also is essential.

The North Olmsted school board believes that teacher evaluation should be a continuous, cooperative, constructive process involving both the evaluator and the teacher. The teacher should be clear as to what is expected, and self-evaluation should be an integral element of the process.

The policy also should reflect more specifically the competencies that are expected of a teacher. To its credit, the North Olmsted school board has not only enacted such a policy but supports it through funding of inservice and providing enough administrators to implement it.

Program concerns

The North Olmsted program is not without its problems. Principals often

Updating School Board Policies is published eleven times annually and provided to every board member and the policy administrator of school districts that participate in the National School Boards Association's Direct Affiliate Program or subscribe to NSBA's Educational Policies Service. EPS Staff: Dale Gaddy, director, education and management services department; Brenda Z. Greene, editor; Eve Shepard, clearinghouse manager.

Information presented in EPS/NSBA publications does not necessarily reflect official NSBA viewpoints.

Copyright 1987 National School Boards Association. All Rights Reserved. Permission to reprint articles may be requested through the editor.

NSBA President
Jonathan T. Howe

NSBA
Executive Director
Thomas A. Shannon

Associate
Executive Director
James Betchkal

Assistant
Executive Director
Robert E. Lucas

voice a concern that the instructional aspects of teaching are being emphasized to the detriment of holding teachers accountable for matters outside the classroom. That is, they are concerned that the pendulum has swung too far.

Underlying our approach, however, is the belief that teaching is a profession, not simply a technical occupation. Teaching performance, therefore, extends beyond the classroom. Although effective classroom instruction certainly is the major component of good teaching, other factors must be considered. Clearly, the evaluator must take into account far more than one particular observation.

From our perspective, the process does provide this opportunity through evaluation of the "professional climate categories" (see box). Moreover, the focal point of evaluation should be on the teaching process rather than the teacher, while recognizing that the accumulation of evidence gleaned by doing so will inevitably reflect on the teacher as a person.

Professional climate categories

One set of performance variables evaluated under the North Olmsted evaluation program relates to professional climate. These variables are:

- classroom management
- pupil-teacher relationships
- pupil-pupil relationships
- teacher-parent communication
- performance of required school routines and responsibilities.

The indicators under this last variable relate to completion of assigned duties, tasks, or responsibilities; meeting of stated deadlines; and helping to supervise students in the total school setting.

This philosophy recognizes that observation and evaluation are two related but different processes. In North Olmsted, observation is supervisory and formative in nature. Feedback to teachers regarding their teaching and student learning during a specific classroom situation is geared to improving instruction.

Evaluation, on the other hand, is summative. Its purpose is to judge the overall value of a teacher to the system based in large part on observation but including other teacher responsibilities to

Some alternative plan outcomes

Examples of the dynamic nature of the alternative evaluation abound. They include student, parent, and peer evaluation of teaching performance, videotaped lessons focusing on specific teaching behaviors, as well as specific project and product-oriented activities such as:

- planning and directing an inservice workshop for area teachers in a specific subject field;
- a business teacher developing a student secretary program;
- developing pre- and post-unit mathematics skills tests for use of mastery learning techniques correlated to textbooks and course of study;
- publishing articles about school system special programs;
- developing an alternative comprehensive observation/evaluation format appropriate for guidance counselors and library specialists;
- guiding parent evaluation of a guidance plan designed to increase student/parent interaction;
- designing student evaluation forms that correspond more closely to specific subject matter;
- organizing individual learning packets into self-teaching chemistry units;
- developing a workbook for drug and alcohol awareness for use by all district elementary teachers;
- charting student behavior with recommendations for changing teaching procedures;
- reviewing computer software and developing a resource book for school system teachers correlated with course of study;
- forming a volunteer parent program for diagnosing and defining kindergarten students' developmental skills;
- preparing a resource booklet on the State of Ohio for the course of study;
- implementing a plan using volunteers to teach computer awareness and keyboarding at the elementary level;
- developing an alternative spelling program for gifted students;
- administering parent evaluations of teacher-parent conferences with recommendations for their improvement;
- developing and distributing a brochure on *tips for homework, study habits, and facts about our school*;
- organizing lunch hour group guidance sessions dealing with healthy eating habits;
- organizing National Honor Society students into a peer tutoring contingent for use in study hall periods.

make decisions regarding employment.

Other administrative concerns include the fact that the program requires much written feedback and many pre- and post-conferences that are time consuming. Given the acceptance of the program, it is time well spent. Over and over again, teachers write of their positive feelings toward the process and of the improvement in their attitude toward evaluation.

Conclusive evidence

North Olmsted's evaluation program has been in the implementation stage for three years. Revisions have come as a result of reconvening the original planning committee.

A high degree of satisfaction is expressed when the program is evaluated. For example, a teacher commented, "For the first time in my career, I believe the

principal is in my classroom to help me by providing constructive suggestions and not just to criticize my work. My principal provides me with a rationale for why positive behaviors are important and effective. This has helped to reinforce what I do well."

Just as significantly, teacher evaluation was singled out as one of North Olmsted's exceptional programs during a North Central review, visitations during our recent selection as a Presidential Excellence Award Winner, and our state education department inspection.

Our program has created a mind set that evaluates teaching—not teachers. It is more effective in changing undesirable behavior, and more productive in terms of the professional growth of teachers. Through our teacher evaluation program, therefore, we serve the needs of our students better. We believe that is the ultimate criterion. ■